GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:270
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2009
SETTING UP OF NEW CHANNELS
Singh Shri Rajiv Ranjan (Lalan)

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has sought the advise of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on the parameters or eligibility criteria and also financial viability for setting up of new Television (TV) channels;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the TRAI has recommended raising of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in TV channels;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number and the names of TV channels with FDI permitted to operate in the country presently alongwith the details of FDI therein, category-wise?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING(AMBIKA SONI)

(a) to (e) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.270 FOR ANSWER ON 8.12.2009

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. A reference has been made by this Ministry to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in October 2009. Among other things, TRAI has been requested to examine the maximum number of channels which can be permitted in the country keeping in view the available spectrum and transponder capacities as well as technological developments and general practice internationally and to examine the eligibility criteria with regard to financial viability and experience of the organization seeking permission. Reply from TRAI is awaited.

(c) & (d): Yes Sir.TRAI had given a recommendation for raising the FDI limit in news & current affairs TV channels to 49% from the present 26%. The matter has been referred back to TRAI as to whether it would like to revisit its recommendations in the light of press notes 2 and 4 of 2009 issued by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion with regard to the calculation of indirect foreign investment. The reply from TRAI is awaited.

(e): The Uplinking/Downlinking guidelines prescribe the criteria for foreign equity. As per these guidelines, out of 512 private satellite TV channels which have been permitted so far, 233 TV channels have varying amount of foreign investment within the prescribed limit. The list indicating the names of channels along with percentage of foreign equity therein as per available records is Annexed. Since the Foreign Investment caps prescribed are composite caps including both FDI and FII investments no further break-up is being maintained with regard to the type of foreign investment within the cap.